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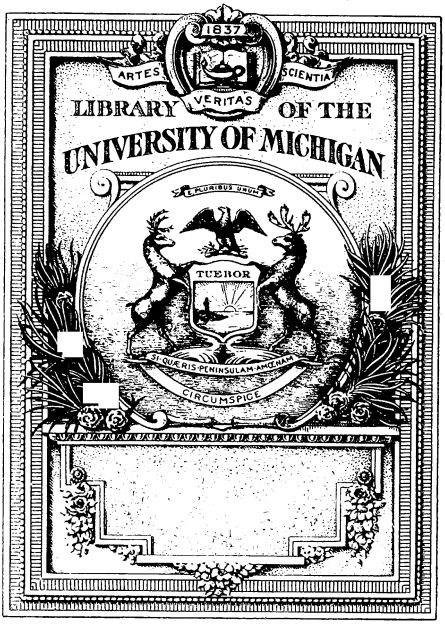

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LETTERS

FROM A

PEERESS OF ENGLAND

TO HER

ELDEST SON.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, (Succeſſor to Mr. ALMON,) oppoſite Burlington Houſe, Piccadilly.

MDCCLXXXIV.

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12-27-27 MDB

THESE LETTERS were found in a pocket-book, in the foot path that leads from Fulham to Hammerſmith. The perſon who picked them up, hopes the public will read them with the ſame pleaſure he felt in the peruſal of them; and that the Authoreſs of them will pardon his giving them to the world before the time ſhe intended. The ſame pocket-book contained ſome unfiniſhed works, which ſhall ſoon be returned to her, uncopied and untouched,—as he thinks any alteration in her ſtyle would diminiſh the merit of it.

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LETTERS, &c.

PREFATORY LETTER.

1773.

THE other morning I was talking to a friend of mine whose understanding I have a great opinion of. The subject of our conversation was matrimony. Though Mr. *** and I often differed in our opinions

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upon the ſubject, we both agreed matrimony, in this country, was leſs calculated to make people happy then any other inſtitution human or divine. We were both by turns ſevere and facetious upon it; but wit and pleaſantry at laſt gave way to ſerious truth, and we agreed it was a neceſſary evil, and ever muſt retain its power. We ſettled ſeveral points in which we could turn that power into the comfort of either ſex; but that, as it now remains, is a power which is the ſource of all the miſery of that part of human kind which moſt deſerves to be happy,—I mean the ſofter ſex, whoſe education

and

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and nature makes it bear in patient and dumb regret the arbitrary power an Engliſh huſband has over his wife. The ſerious turn our converſation had taken, cauſed a ſilence of a few minutes, which I ſhould not have interrupted, when my friend ſaid, It is indeed impoſſible for one human being to be more in the power of another, than an Engliſh wife is in that of her huſband. You cannot alter this melancholy truth, nor the opinions and prejudices of the preſent age; but you have a ſon, and I hope you will form his mind after your own ideas, and teach him to be happy himſelf, by making the woman

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he is deſtined to live with perfectly ſo. Mr.*** left me; his laſt words flung me into a deep reverie. I ſaw you, my dear ſon, in idea, grown up —I ſaw you at one and twenty with all the gallant ſpirit and beauty that ſhould be tranſmitted to you from my noble anceſtors—I ſaw thoſe advantages abuſed by the licentiouſneſs of a country, where generous minds and virtuous principles ſuffer the moſt ignominious ſlavery—under the ſacred name of liberty; I ſaw your mind tainted by prejudices, and your heart heardened. There imagination left the picture I had drawn, and the tenderneſs of my heart made me

wiſh

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wiſh you could ever remain the helpleſs lovely infant I then ſaw really before my eyes; my care and attentions your ſole protection, and my arms your ſafeſt refuge. Reflection, accompanied by all the dignity of truth, told me the wiſh was impoſſible: And ſhall I, cried I, and kiſſed my pretty boy, who dare at one and twenty *think* and condemn from conſcious worth—ſhall I ſuffer my boy, when he is one and twenty, to be afraid of acting from himſelf—and I his mother? In ſhort, I followed the irreſiſtible impulſe I felt of addreſſing you upon the moſt material of all ſubjects—I ſhall write one or two

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letters in a year to you, till I think I can adviſe no further. When you read them, your own reaſon is the only judge I appeal to in any doubt that may ariſe in your mind from the ſingularity of many things I ſhall ſay; for I foreſee you will think them ſingular, till you have weighed them in the ſcale of judgment. I mean to place you to yourſelf in every ſituation, agreeable or otherwiſe, to which a married man is expoſed; I mean you ſhould read them at a time of life, when, governed by your paſſions, you will moſt want a friend who is biaſſed by none. What motive can I have for taking this trouble, but

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but my regard to your happineſs, mingled with the pity I feel for my own ſex?

In all probability, the greateſt part of your life will be paſſed in the marriage ſtate. I ſhall endeavour to prevent you forming to yourſelf agreeable illuſions, that will vaniſh upon a nearer approach, and leave you to drag your chains with regret for the remainder of your life, or break them in a manner which muſt ever be a painful or ſhameful thorn in your memory. In marriage, as in life, be aſſured it is not the pleaſant or diſagreeable things

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that may happen to you that abſolutely conſtitute your happineſs or miſery. The manner in which you conduct yourſelf under thoſe events, will moſt influence your peace of mind—*peace of mind*; a treaſure no misfortune can deſtroy——the greateſt enemies to it are your own paſſions, inevitably attached to human nature, which grow with your ſtature, ſtrengthen with your reaſon, and never leave you but with life. Reflection cannot annihilate them, and, were that poſſible, Heaven forbid I ſhould adviſe you to ſuppreſs them. Sources of delight! they were given us that we might enjoy every bliſs.

Treat

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Treat them as friends, but oftener as ſervants, and you will find them, by turns, uſeful and oſtenſible pleaſures.

It is innumerable the perſons who have in this and paſt ages addreſſed women on every ſubject and in every ſituation in life. This general addreſs has been a general error, particularly in this country, where, from the laws and diſpoſitions of men, women are almoſt in every reſpect made a ſecond ſort of beings, depending on (and deriving their only conſequence from) the approbation of men. The perſons who have adviſed

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viſed our ſex have always failed in their good intentions——in all ages we have run into the ſame errors, been ruined by the ſame faults, drawn into them by the ſame cauſes, and in general the moſt accompliſhed of our ſex have appeared the moſt blameable in the eyes of the world. Why this? Becauſe all thoſe who have given us rules to follow, have not conſidered that our ſtate of dependence makes it impoſſible for us to act for ourſelves: the men we belong to are the firſt cauſes of every action, good or bad, that we commit; to them therefore we ought to addreſs our eloquence and reaſon, if we mean

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mean to make the world in general more rational or happy than it has hitherto been. It is a ſweet and benevolent ſenſation I experience, when I think, that, ſhould I be diſappointed in the hopes of my own offſpring's attending to my council, others may pluck ſome refreſhing flower from the noſegay I am making up for you, and it may ſweeten the path they are deſtined to walk in. Wear it near your heart, my ſon; you are the object it ſhould moſt adorn: it was my high-beating, haughty, but infinitely tender heart, that imagined this preſent for you:

upon

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upon me, when ſcarcely of age, the world beſtowed all its gaieties, all its homage, its joys, and my fleeting hours their intoxicating charms; I, my ſon, extract from all I ſee, and all I hear, advice, which, when retired to my own room at night, I conſecrate to you, my dear child—I impatiently get rid of diamonds, feathers, robes, and waiting-women; I collect the world, and all its malice, within the narrow circle of my bed-curtains—place you in the midſt of the horrid picture—and with the utmoſt pleaſure ſave you from ſorrow or remorſe, by repreſenting what may

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may happen. Heaven prosper my affectionate design, and make the following Letters the *bouquet de fête* eternal to your future days !

********* ******

LETTER

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LETTER I.

March, 1775.

DO not imagine, becauſe the law has put your wife intirely in your power, that it is juſt or right ſhe ſhould be ſo. I have heard men boaſt of that power, as if it was conſtituted by their merit. Trace that power to its ſource, and you will find it proceed from the natural propenſity Engliſhmen ever had for tyranny. It was men who made the laws, and thoſe give a man an unlimited power over his wife.

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wife. Jack Ketch might, with the ſame propriety and delicacy, boaſt of his hanging his fellow-creatures with impunity, as a huſband to ſay he may lock up his wife, not give her any money, or ſuffer her to enjoy the amuſements and ſocieties ſhe likes.——You ſtart, my ſon—I have heard *ſome*; not only *one*, obſerve; but *ſome* huſbands boaſt of theſe barbarous privileges.

Let no one who reads theſe letters imagine, from the beginning of them, that I mean to depreciate your ſex, or draw a flattering picture of my own. My ſole intention is to ſhew you

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you human nature as it is, taking from before it all the ſkreens which cuſtom, prejudices, and laws, have placed: ſtrong and numerous as they are, nature will ever maintain its power in the human breaſt. Nature, ever juſt, has given to both ſexes the ſame paſſions: your own feelings will inform you that *we* have as great a right to exerciſe thoſe paſſions as you have; almoſt every *wiſe* book, or ſaying, orders and adviſes us not to feel their power. Many men think they govern their paſſions, but many more never think of them at all. Thoſe who fancy they maſter theirs, are blinded by vanity, the

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the moſt ridiculous of all the paſſions; and thoſe who never reflect upon them, are made varying victims, by all the paſſions by turns; and from the firſt ſtep they take into the world, to the moment they fall into the grave, their lives and opinions are deſpicably inconſtant and uncomfortably reſtleſs—I repeat it, my ſon, manage your paſſions properly; they are the ſources of our happineſs. The deſire of my heart is ſatisfied, if I prevent yours from being the cauſe of that variety of miſery with which an Engliſh life abounds.—I will now ſuppoſe you married to a beautiful young

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woman that you are paſſionately fond of; I will ſuppoſe her poſſeſſed of every talent, every grace, and her mind and temper making all theſe advantages appear in the ſtrongeſt light—this is the ſituation in which I ſhall firſt place you; becauſe, if you know the value of ſuch a woman, ſuch a ſituation only can gratify the pride and tenderneſs of your heart; and if that heart has as much of both as I wiſh, ſuch a companion as I have drawn only is capable of beſtowing happineſs upon you. Let your firſt ſtep be to make her independent as to money. If her

her family have been careleſs in your marriage ſettlements, and forgot the article of pin-money, ſettle the pin-money ſuitable, out of your own power, that ſhe never may experience the humiliation of dependence. Let her comfort and her pleaſures be the ſtudy of your life, and yours will be one continued ſcene of pleaſure. Never give her the leaſt cauſe to imagine you know the extent of your power over her; never let a word eſcape your lips that may make her recollect that harſh one, *obey*. If ſhe ever thinks of it in its full force, I will anſwer for her being afraid of you; and tho'

I ſuppoſe ſhe loves you as much as you love her, it will not be for a long time, if once ſhe feels afraid of you. Make her believe you are her ſlave, and then ſhe will be in her mind as well as perſon yours. Woman is by nature a more obedient and gentle creature than man; but the moſt timid of us all has a will of her own, which, confined, only grows ſtronger. Once perſuade woman ſhe acts from herſelf, and ſhe will have no will but yours. The firſt thing that ſtrikes a woman's mind upon the firſt diſagreeable thing her huſband does, are the words ſhe pronounced at the ceremony

remony of her marriage; ſhe has promiſed to *love*, to *honour*, and *obey*. The firſt is not in her own power; the ſecond is impoſſible, if her huſband is a deſpicable object; and the third, let him be what he may, ſhe muſt fulfil to the utmoſt extent of the word, and therefore deteſts the ſound of it—from a natural conſciouſneſs, that no human being has a right to controul our actions, when we are arrived at the age of reaſon. We only hate controul the more for knowing we are obliged to ſubmit to it—ſuch is human nature. You will ſee men, who, from inclination,

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would paſs the greateſt part of their lives out of their own country, once exiled, they will, at the hazard of a diſcovery, at the expence of ſociety, and their own name, return, and live obſcurely in ſome remote corner of it. I never walked in a ſhrubbery ſurrounded by a ſunk fence, that I did not imagine I had half a dozen good reaſons for wiſhing to croſs the fence in half a dozen different places. Believe me, my dear ſon, there are many wives who would, at the hazard of their necks, leap the many ſunk fences huſbands place round their free-will. Wherever law or cuſtom has given you a ſunk fence, plant it up with every

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every ſweeteſt ſhrub to ſkreen it from the eyes of your wife: by theſe I mean the attentions and reſpectful tenderneſs with which your ſex ſeduce our hearts, and keep up that charming union, often ſeen between a lover and his miſtreſs, but, to your diſgrace I ſay it, which you ſo ſeldom continue after ſhe has conferred the higheſt obligation on you, by ſolemnly ſubjecting her time and perſon to your caprice. Though Love is a child, it can never be made ſick of ſweets. Juſtly is it repreſented to us in that form; in ſmiles and pleaſure it exiſts, but

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flies at the approach of frowns or care. Ever remember that this child has wings: it does not ſtay to make faces, and ſhew you its diſtaſte to the bitter potions it ſees prepared for him; it is fled far off before you imagine it means to go; and though your wife (as every virtuous woman does) may reproach herſelf with not loving you, pretend that ſhe does, and make herſelf wretched upon finding ſhe loves you no longer, ſtill ſhe loves you not; nor can ſhe, if her love is once extinguiſhed by fear.—— There are many extinguiſhers to love,

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love, but none ſo common as fear, none half ſo irretrievable, none half ſo dangerous; the moſt obvious, the leaſt to be avoided. A woman of a leſs refined underſtanding and heart than I have ſuppoſed your wife to have, though blind to all your faults, will not be blind to your power: I recommend to you, therefore, to hide it. You may even annihilate the very idea of fear in her breaſt. Love or Friendſhip admits of none but that elegant fear of diſpleaſing or giving pain to what we love. The more noble a mind is, the more it abhors the idea of ſlavery or fear.

I ſhould

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I ſhould rather call the fear I admit of, a hope; for fear is ſo deteſtable a ſenſation, that I am certain no great mind will ever ſubmit to it; it riſes above all fear, and prefers death to ſlavery.——Good night, my deareſt ſon. May your heart be as gentle and affectionate as I ſuppoſe your partner's to be!—I am this night returned from a ball, where one of my partners danced as if he had two wooden legs before he had finiſhed one dance. When I ſaw that, I told him I was tired, and would ſit down the next dance, knowing we muſt change partners

the

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the dance following.——I hope, in the great dance of life, you will never accompany your partner with a bad grace, leſt ſhe ſhould quit you as I did mine in a leſs ſerious manner this night.

********* ******.

LETTER

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LETTER II.

April, 1773.

I Have admitted to your wife the fear of diſpleaſing you; leave to her likewiſe all her natural modeſty. Huſbands generally teach their wives to be immodeſt, and then hate them for being ſo. A married man returns from a journey; his wife with a room full of people thinks it right to embrace him before the whole circle: if that man her huſband was only her lover, would ſhe act in that manner?—No.

Do

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Do not ſleep in the ſame bed, nor, if you can avoid it, in the ſame room with your wife. How indelicate for you to ſtep into her bed, and her maids in the room; or into her bed-chamber, even whilſt ſhe is undreſſing. Her bed and chamber are yours: if you ſtay out late, her attention will make her ſit up for you; or, ſhould you retire with a head-ache at nine o'clock, ſhe will think it her duty to go to bed at that hour. A thouſand circumſtances may happen that will make her afraid of beſtowing that time upon her perſon that cleanlineſs requires — a million of little fears of this ſort ſhe will feel by

turns.

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turns. Her delicacy in all of them will make her indelicate, and her affections may become troubleſome, if not extinguiſh yours. I do not ſay you ſhould never ſleep with your wife : I ſay have two beds, two bed-chambers. There will happen, in the courſe of time, ſeveral unavoidable circumſtances which may make her an unpleaſant companion in bed, and you very diſagreeable, ſuppoſing diſcord ſhould never reign between you:—but ſuppoſe, for an inſtant, you quarrel,—how horrid to be obliged to inform your whole houſe, and your upholſterer, that you chuſe no longer to ſleep with your wife.

Never

Never come near your wife's bed till her maids are quite retired from the apartment. If you were her lover, you durſt not, and if you mean your wife ſhould love you, never let the huſband take any greater liberty than the lover would. Scarcely ever attend your wife's toilet; ſhe will be afraid of beſtowing thoſe pains upon her perſon ſhe ought, leſt you ſhould ſuſpect her of coquetry—and yet at breakfaſt ſhe means to pleaſe you more than ſhe did an hour before when undreſſed; and at dinner, *en grande parure*, ſhe intends you ſhould find her ſtill more charming. Were I a man, I ſhould think it a bad

ſign,

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ſign, if my wife wore an ugly night-cap ill placed, or a handkerchief careleſsly thrown round her neck in a morning; yet, if I attended her toilet, twenty ſuch awkward circumſtances would certainly happen. What an abominable thing for a man to come into a woman's room when her ſhoulders are expoſed, or ſhe is drawing on her ſtockings, particularly when there is a third perſon by! and yet huſbands do this conſtantly.—I hope neither you, or any other reader, imagine theſe Letters are to be trifling, becauſe I begin by citing trifles. It is not two or three conſequential great qualities in the heart

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heart of a married man that will make his life, or that of his wife, happy. Ah no, my ſon! it is the attention to trifles, ten thouſand of which I may perchance forget in the courſe of a million; at leaſt, which I ought to delineate, and which, neglected, make married people in general ſo unhappy. I cannot help it that marriage generally deſtroys the very principle from whence it ſprings, love — the moſt charming of all paſſions; but I ſee the errors in it— I would have *you* avoid them. A young and pretty woman never looks half ſo much ſo as when her hair is

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ſlying about, untortured by pins. Your wife is both pretty and young; you may aſk her leave to ſee her often while her hair is dreſſing:—if ſhe has fine hair, you will not be the only perſon admitted to her toilet. Take particular care not to be the laſt idolater at the ſhrine of her beauty.——Adieu, my ſon! I am going for a few weeks into the country: at my return, when again I am ſurrounded by the world you are deſtined to live in—when aſſemblies, balls, drawing-rooms, and all my acquaintance, furniſh me with a thouſand pictures of *noble* couples—

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couples — I ſhall again renew my advice with my obſervations, and further prove myſelf, your affectionate mother,

********* ******.

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LETTER III.

May, 1773.

THE diſtance I have recommended to you in my laſt letter, will not only alleviate every misfortune or inconvenience that may happen in future to you, but give a poignancy to the pleaſures and comforts which I hope you will daily find in your union.

It is a much greater misfortune in marriage, when the huſband ceaſes to love his wife, than when a wife ceaſes

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ceaſes to love her huſband. With a man's *love* generally ceaſes all common civility and attention; but a woman is obliged to keep up both to her huſband. My firſt wiſh is, that you may ever love your wife; but as, by daily practice, eagles can look ſteadfaſtly at the ſun without being dazzled by the brightneſs of it, ſo, by degrees, you will be ſo much accuſtomed to the charms of your wife, that they will loſe their effect upon you. I have imagined your wife to be beautiful and accompliſhed; but ſhe may not be *perfect* in every point of mind or perſon. Your familiariſing yourſelf

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with her charms, will imperceptibly open your eyes to her defects; you will be ſurpriſed at yourſelf for not having perceived them before; they will gradually counterbalance her merit in your heart, till that heart will grow inſenſible to it, and find it, according to your ideas, in women inferior to her in every reſpect. I am not forming a misfortune for you; I am only telling you what does happen, what has, and what is moſt likely to happen to married people. I cannot alter human nature, nor the marriage ſtate. Between the diſorders incident to the firſt, and the *diſorder* we create in the

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the latter, time is a bitter potion to ſwallow. How heavy and dull will each hour drag on, that you are obliged to paſs with your wife, if you do not love her! How many pitiful excuſes (if you make any) will you invent to leave her! Your own houſe, *her* home, will be diſagreeable to you. I ſee you going full gallop from the door, and returning curſing your horſe for walking ſo faſt. Her muſic will be diſcord to your ear; and when ſhe beſtows any favour upon you, the inſenſibility that familiarity has created, turned into diſlike, will make you ſhrink from the touch of that fair

hand which others would kneel down to kiſs. You will diſlike her relations becauſe they are hers; your coolneſs will be returned by them: your two families will reciprocally catch the infection, and mutually avoid each other. The only comfortable pairs I have ſeen are, when the man is about ſix and thirty years of age, and the woman five and twenty; and where there has been much contradiction in their inclination——but I have ſuppoſed for you what is moſt likely to happen; that you will marry a very young woman, in the height of youthful paſſion for her perſon—I endea-

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endeavour to preſerve that paſſion, as the only perfect happineſs you will ever taſte of. I ſhall not, in this ſheet of paper, ſet before your eyes the conſequence *to her* of your not loving her; I confine myſelf merely to the miſery it will occaſion in *your* mind. I have held up a ſmall part of the picture to you; now I will preſent it all to you:— Young, amiable, beautiful, will ſhe long bear your indifference in ſilent ſorrow? No; reproaches, tears, anger, jealouſy, ſcorn, by turns will ſhe feel and employ againſt you; and when you no longer ſee and hear theſe, be aſſured you are ſup-

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planted in her breaſt by ſome other object, moſt likely an amiable one, which ſhe will idolize more by comparing your conduct to his, than for his intrinſic merit.—I have ſuppoſed love totally eraſed from your breaſt—but there is vanity ſtill remaining; and how will it torture you to ſee the ſmile of contempt upon her lip, and the calm, ſettled glance of diſdain in her eye, that before then bowed timidly with grief to the ground at the ſight of your coldneſs!—how will your pride bear the flaſhes of her youthful wit, holding up by her manners, if not her words, your conduct in the dreſs

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of ridicule, when ſhe is in ſpirits; or the haughty and frozen deportment of her juſtly-offended merit, when ſhe is in a melancholy mood;—how will you bear to ſee all the men of your acquaintance paying homage to the manners you think deteſtable!—how angry will you feel with the world in general, admiring what you now deſpiſe!—how much more, when you are obliged to aſſent to all the fine things you hear ſaid of her! My dear ſon, I have ſeen lovers ceaſe to love their miſtreſſes, diſcarded by them, grieved and hurt to the ſoul at being obliged to give them up. No wonder; women,

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women, looked up to by the whole world, are of ſuch intrinſic value to a man's vanity, that it coſts him many a pang to renounce the idea of their being *his*. I hope you will never experience the pangs of diſappointed vanity in this caſe; though I ſhould not pity you, if you did; for the inſtant a woman becomes your victim, you ſhould give her up; but preſerve that gratitude and eſteem for her, and that attention to her, as may prevent her from becoming the victim of any other man's vanity.

An acquaintance of mine, who had

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had for his wife one of the pretlieſt women in England, had a cuſtom of ſaying before all company, that he thought his wife *the prettieſt woman* in England. At the end of ſome years, he not only ceaſed to love his wife, but fancied himſelf in love with a woman whoſe perſon was very inferior to that of his wife; but having ſo repeatedly told his wife, his friends, and his acquaintances, that he thought his wife *the prettieſt woman* in England, he continued bravely repeating it, long after his friends thought, and his wife was very ſure, that he diſliked her very much:

much: to them he muſt have appeared fooliſh, and to her very falſe. My dear ſon, your wife, loving or not loving you, may and will forgive you errors in friendſhip, and many infidelities; but muſt deſpiſe you, if you appear falſe and fooliſh.

Among many other pains I wiſh to ſpare you, I wiſh your conduct may ſecure you and her from mutual reproaches, leſt you ſhould be ſilenced in the ſame manner I once ſaw a huſband, who was taxing his wife with what ſhe had done at one time, and

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and what ſhe had done at another; things very trivial, and what belonged to her extreme youth and natural gaiety of heart. She liſtened patiently to his long enumeration, which he ended with a—*Can you deny all this?* I expected a ſerious defence from her, ſuitable to the ſourneſs conveyed in his language and looks; but ſhe, with much candour and ſpirit, ſaid,—All you have ſaid is true, and, with the temptations I had, I am aſtoniſhed I did not do much more, and much worſe.

Yes, my ſon, I will, if *my advice* is

is taſted by you, ever preſerve you from having any occaſion to enumerate even the moſt trifling follies committed by your wife.

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LETTER

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LETTER IV.

May, 1773.

LOOK among the great families in this kingdom; you will ſee that relations are ſeldom friends. If you choſe to take the trouble of tracing moſt family diſputes to their ſource, you would find that want of politeneſs is the primitive cauſe of them all. An aunt, an uncle, an elder brother or ſiſter, fancy, becauſe they are come into the world ſome years before perſons whom they are allied to, that they may take any

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liberty of manner or ſpeech with them: thoſe younger relations, dignified by their birth or eſtabliſhment, perchance too ſupremely dignified in mind, and at a time of life when they are the brighteſt ornaments of ſociety, think, and juſtly think, their allies ought to be as reſpectful to them, as the reſt of the world is.

If, then, familiarity creates coolneſs, and even diſlike, between people who live but little with each other; how much more likely it is to produce abſolute averſion between two people who are to paſs their whole life together! I have heard one

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one huſband ſay to a circle of friends, "O pray ſit ſtill, it is only my "wife;" and, upon her coming into the room, never riſe from his chair, but give, by his example, a liberty to his intimates to treat his wife only as his upper ſervant. Another ſays, "Why do you wear feathers, my "dear Fanny?" She anſwers, "It is "the faſhion." He returns, "But I do "not like them, and you ſhould dreſs "to pleaſe me." That huſband ſays this, becauſe he thinks he has a right to ſay ſo. A third tells his wife her new gown is ill choſen, and does not become her. A hundred ſuch liberties

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huſbands daily take, which ſhock a woman's vanity and love of power.

There is a pride in youth, in beauty, and ſtill a juſter one attending a ſuperior underſtanding. I have ſuppoſed your wife poſſeſſed of them all; be aſſured, if ſhe is juſt to herſelf, ſhe will be ſo to you—her education has taught her to be well bred in every action towards you; and if you are not ſo to her, her judgment muſt direct her ſome time or other to retaliate, and copy your manners, reſerving her own for thoſe who may deſerve them.—If you, or your wife,

or

or both indeed, ſhould be ſeized with the love of travelling, never remain in the carriage with her above two poſts in a day. Men generally ſleep in a carriage; women ſeldom or ever do. Frequently you meet a pair of gentlefolks, the man aſleep, the woman reading. Your wife would not be aſhamed to meet her friends, if they ſaw her reading in her carriage with her maid in it; but you there! ſuch an occupation muſt be a ſatire upon you, or a reproach to her. Then you may be cold, and ſhe may not be ſo; in this caſe it muſt be an eternal diſpute or ſacrifice about the glaſſes being up or down. You

may like flying, ſhe a moderate pace: your impatience or her nerves are to be exerciſed in this caſe. It is ſuch trifles as theſe, that ſteal inviſibly into the connection between you, that will make you, like other couples, lay the blame upon the words *huſband* and *wife*—they are words only, my dear ſon; and if you treat one another as if you were not huſband and wife, you will love one another for ever. I ſee few married people happy; I wiſh you to be ſo. When I retire from a croud of both ſexes, I reflect upon the obſervations I have made upon the many ill-paired I ſee. I ſee too

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too the cauſes of their diſagreements. Few people imagine the livelieſt hours of my life are the ſources of theſe letters; but it is from the world, and not from my own chains, that I draw my juſteſt pictures. My feeling heart might be partially ſevere or flattering, were I to paint from them; but in the faults or follies of other married people, nothing can bias my pen but juſtice. If any of your ſex think it is dipp'd in gall, let them be aſſured it is becauſe I have found nothing but gall to dip it into.

I ſuppoſe your wife ſtill younger

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than you are—though the natural timidity and playfulneſs of her age prevent her from making any reflections at all, the time will come when her taſte and character will be decided. Totally will it be your own fault, if you have not cheriſhed the tender branches of her inclinations, and made them twine about your heart for ever, while her mind looks to that heart alone for protection or comfort.

I have converſed with very ſenſible men of every other civilized nation, as well as Engliſh. I never heard one yet that did not declare, that Engliſh

Engliſh women were the firſt women, the only women, they would chuſe for wives. I, who eſteem and pity my country-women as they deſerve, and who have ſtudied them much, proteſt theſe foreigners had a very juſt opinion. Mild, generous, romantically faithful are Engliſh women by nature; but their minds, plunged into deſpair by the men whoſe victims they are, are forced to fly their tyrants—or ſeek by cunning to mitigate the harſhneſs of their fate.

Your jewels and plate you ſecure from robbers; the moſt precious treaſure you have is your wife—ſhe is

is to be the mother of *your* children. My dear ſon! * *protect* her firſt, I conjure you; and if ſhe is an Engliſh woman, I, as another, will anſwer for her behaving in ſuch a manner as ſhall inſure her your eſteem.

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* You wonder why I ſo ſtrongly mark this word—you look around for the dangers that threaten her—*Envy* and *intereſt*, my ſon, form a million—your relations—hers perhaps—your very ſervants may find ſome account in dividing you—*She*, your wife, cannot protect you from their deſigns; but you may protect her, and *muſt*—yes, you *muſt!*

LETTER

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LETTER V.

May, 1773.

IT is not only from the fear of your growing inſenſible to the pleaſures your wife's mind or perſon gives you, that I hold up the danger of familiarity in ſo ſtrong a light; but from a more ſerious fear of the effect that inſenſibility may have upon her affections for you.

Figure to yourſelf, my dear ſon, that every man who ſees her, will tell her, directly or indirectly, deſignedly

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ſignedly or not, how charming ſhe is. That univerſal power which beauty has in the breaſt of all mankind, is not to be hid from any woman; and fools, inſenſible to every other advantage, are conſcious of that power. It is that conſciouſneſs that leads women into irretrievable errors, becauſe they ſee the effect of their merit over every mortal that approaches them but their own huſband. A friend of mine had a remarkable handſome hand and arm: every one who ſaw either admired them, except her huſband, who did not ſeem to know ſhe had an arm or hand belonging to her.

I am.

I am certain ſhe thought him very ſtupid; for there are few women who are generous (or reflect) enough to attribute a huſband's indifference to the true cauſe, ſatiety: no, my ſon, in ſuch caſes, a wife thinks her huſband unfeeling, unjuſt; he appears to her leſs poliſhed, leſs ſenſible, than a dozen of other men in the room with him, who very likely are much inferior to him in point of taſte or underſtanding. Flattery is called a poiſon; like many other poiſons, judiciouſly adminiſtered, it may prevent or cure diſorders. Never fail, when you have an opportunity, of paying your wife a com-

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a compliment: keep her in good humour with herſelf, and ſhe will be ſo to you:—I do not mean by compliments or flattery, that groſs kind of adulation, which makes the perſons to whom it is addreſſed bluſh for themſelves and thoſe who give it —I mean thoſe compliments, which your actions, more than all the ſoft words love invents, can pay her. For example: never interrupt her in the middle of a ſong or an intereſting detail, to tell her your coach is at the door. You muſt be much more attentive to her graces and accompliſhments than to her beauty. Very few Engliſh women have grace,

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grace, and it is looked up to by perſons of taſte as ſomething very valuable from the rarity of it; and talents coſt the brighteſt geniuſes time and trouble: a woman, therefore, can never forgive you overlooking ſo uncommon a perfection as grace, and form a mean opinion of your judgment, if you do not pay attention to her talents. Lord Cheſterfield has already told us, that the moſt pleaſing flattery that can be addreſſed to a pretty woman, is the praiſe of her mind—thinking it a weakneſs peculiar to our ſex; which it is not: for, really, beautiful perſons of either ſex are ſo accuſtomed

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cuſtomed to the effect they have on all ranks, ages, and ſexes, that they ſeem inſenſible of it, and to every thing that can be ſaid to them upon the ſubject—But look at the reverſe: an ugly woman's virtue would be in great danger, if a man was to aſſure her *be* thought her pretty; and the firſt woman that likes an ugly man, makes him a coxcomb. Admiration is ſo new, ſo uncommon, ſo unexpected a pleaſure to ugly people, that good ſenſe is taken by ſurpriſe, and lets in vanity and all its train.

I am very certain no beautiful woman

woman exiſts, that ever paſſionately loved a man, who deſerved to be ſo, that has not ſaid to herſelf, "I wiſh "I could try the experiment, and "be ugly, very ugly, for ſome time, "to ſee if he would love me ſtill!" A woman, who has a refined heart and mind, is always apprehenſive it is the charms of her perſon only, and not her merit, that keeps up your paſſion for her—and if that was the caſe, how long could ſhe imagine her happineſs to laſt? Not a day; for in England beauty is ſo common, that every third woman you meet in the ſtreet, is probably as handſome as your wife.

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LETTER VI.

THE human mind is an active principle; exiſting upon the paſt, or future; ſeldom reflecting upon the preſent moment, except when it is actuated by ſome paſſion. What, then, is imagination? Imagination is ſcarcely ever thought of. I ſhall endeavour to perſonify as much as poſſible this word, to ſhew you its dangerous effects. The picture I have drawn of your wife gives me leave to ſuppoſe ſhe has a very lively imagination. Do not think that beings or things really exiſt-

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exiſting, agreeable or otherwiſe, have half the power of turning her brain that imagination has.

The huſband ſees his young wife giving, with all the eagerneſs of youth, into diſſipation and public amuſements : — the prudent ſoul thinks it his duty to take her from them all, hurries her into ſolitude, and leaves her tête-à tête with the moſt dangerous of all companions, her own imagination. Young and good humoured, it will paint every paſt ſcene of diſſipation in tints of roſe colour; it will dreſs all her admirers in new graces and atten-

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tions, and repreſent her the only idol of admiration. I ſee her in her chair before the fire, her eyes fixed upon it. I ſee every faireal idea that dances in her eye, or dimples in her cheek— I ſee, alas! that her huſband's form ſcarcely gleams upon the picture, or, if it does, it vaniſhes with the word *huſband*. The ſtillneſs of the country, acceptable to the heart filled with an unhappy paſſion, and grateful to a woman of ſettled talents, is unfit for the mind of a happy wife. If yours is what I ſuppoſe her, public amuſements will in a very ſhort time grow tireſome to her; but, ſhould they appear to be

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be her paſſion, multiply the diſeaſe to hurry on the cure: her elegant mind will naturally and ſoon feel the deſire of forming a ſmall ſociety where it may employ itſelf in all the charming duties that friendſhip and eſteem demand of her.

It is a well-choſen few that I would have you conſtantly live with, ſelected from her acquaintance and yours. You are both young; let your ſociety be nearly of your own age; but, I repeat it, no ſolitude. Your fortune permits you to make your houſe a comfortable reception for your friends, and I hope your

manners will induce them to ſeek your company. I would wiſh you to be inferior in nothing but rank to every one at your own table. If you ſtill are your wife's lover, the diſtance you will be obliged to keep from her, in the preſence of your friends, will make your tête-à-têtes more charming; and the preference you will read in her eyes for you, will give you a ſatisfaction you never can experience out of ſociety. I would have you find, that every man in your houſe has merit enough to charm your wife, and your wife fancy every other woman might pleaſe you: that poſſibility will make

you

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you behave in ſuch a manner to one another, that theſe misfortunes will become impoſſible. I do not mean that you ſhould be jealous of one another; I mean to enhance the preference you give to each other. I repeat it, my dear ſon; leave no room for your wife to build *caſtles*, to fancy the things ſhe ſees not are better than thoſe before her eyes. A man, with his houſe full of company, comes in with dirty boots and dripping hair, tired with the chace, and falls aſleep in his wife's elegant dreſſing-room. Any other perſon in the houſe he would avoid, or ſend word he was not fit to be ſeen, and

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dreſs before he appeared. For heaven's ſake! why is the wife to enjoy the only bad ſituation he finds himſelf in, in the courſe of the day.

No place adorned by art or nature to perfection, can pleaſe without ſociety; ſtill will the ſociable ſpirit within make the eyes turn dejected on the ground, if there are not ſome friends to partake with you the beauties of your ſolitude. — I hear John Bull, "Why, my wife is my friend" — Yes, my good friend John; but ſhe has been, ſhe is, ſhe muſt be, your *wife*, and you her huſband. The place is yours, is hers; and unleſs, like

like Adam and Eve, you were the only human pair in your paradiſe, the ſatisfaction is not complete without friends. The mind is formed for ſociety; it muſt ever be a bad or mean reaſon that takes a man out of it. Society enlarges the heart, the underſtanding; refines the manners; and corrects the too natural propenſity all men have of fancying they are ſuperior to the reſt of the world.

Delightful ſenſation! to ſee a few amiable perſons forgetting their ſorrows in your ſmiles; or to perceive they watch the riſing ſigh, and chaſe it

it with the chearful look of friendſhip. How often have I, with a delicious grateful pride, ſeen people, whom I have an eſteem for, watching my countenance, and taking mirth or ſadneſs upon them as I have felt either! Then have I ſaid to myſelf, "I live in their hearts; "be mine the care to hide each "anxious thought that may diſturb "my joys; be mine the care rather "to light up theirs." The deſire of pleaſing then created new graces in my converſation and manner, and I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing my friends forget how faſt the moments flew, and leave me with regret.

Stupid

Stupid minds and vulgar, who cannot underſtand what I have been ſaying, who pay viſits to kill time, and who talk only of the weather and the conduct of other people, and who call ſuch talk converſing, will accuſe me of vanity; but every one, that feels and thinks as I do, will have experienced the pleaſures I have deſcribed. Form friendſhips, my ſon, with people of both ſexes; and be firm and faithful in the duties of them: your wife ſhould ſee that you have many friends. When I ſay many, you will be too happy, if you can find four or five men, and as many women, who may deſerve

ſerve the precious name. Your wife will always ſay to herſelf, "My "conduct ſhall prove to him, to "them, that I deſerve the firſt place "among them in his heart."

When I take ſo much pains to ſhew you the almoſt conſtant neceſſity of ſociety, I do not mean that you ſhould ever ſuffer any one to live conſtantly in your houſe; not even your brother, or her ſiſter. If you have children, it will be a lucky, and perhaps a ſingular, circumſtance, if you are not ſorry that ſome one among them muſt call your houſe their home. Your houſe

ſhould

ſhould feel your *home*—ſad ſituation, when a huſband or wife feels their *home* centered in a ſtranger's breaſt! Never ſuffer any of your friends to talk to you at all about your wife. Let every one who approaches you be utterly ignorant, from your language, of your ſentiments about her mind, perſon, or manners; only let them ſee that you treat her with reſpect, and all around you will model their conduct by yours. It is a fooliſh vanity that induces a man to praiſe the perſon of his wife, and diſcover a treaſure of hidden charms. Should your wife find out this imprudence, ſhe muſt

muſt deſpiſe you for it—her modeſty, ſhocked, muſt be leſſened, or offended.

Never adviſe or reprehend your wife before ſervants, children, or friends: advice or reprehenſion from you, gives them leave to *blame* her, if not in your preſence, to many others. Should you ever differ in your opinion with her when tête-à-tête, and that neither will yield, *never* apply to a third perſon to decide between you. The unfortunate friend is at a loſs how to decide, being ſure that you or your wife will diſlike him, and perhaps, after

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after ſome time, both may condemn him. Your intereſts are ſo cloſely connected, that, in things of conſequence, love and friendſhip will ſettle the diſpute; in trifling differences, time will ſhew which opinion was juſt.——I have imagined every circumſtance that could keep up your paſſion for one another, being certain there is no ſtate ſo happy as that of two married people who love one another. I ſhall ſoon place you in other ſituations, and demonſtrate that the conduct I have hitherto adviſed you to purſue, in the only ſituation I have yet placed you, will be as uſeful in thoſe you may in future find

find yourſelf fallen———uſeful to your own eaſe and comfort, and neceſſary to hide from the world things it ought never to ſee, or know, whatever its ſuſpicions may be.

********* ******.

Poſtſcript.

Pray obſerve that when I ſay *never* do ſuch or ſuch a thing, I mean *never*—for the ſource of diſſentions between married people is, that thoſe things ſhould *ever* have been done——alas! once done, they are repeated.

LET-

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LETTER VII.

I AM ſorry to ſay that envy is the firſt and great ſource of all miſchief in ſociety and families. The world cannot bear to ſee a few people living with harmony and comfort together: it is moſt probable, that ſome of your relations or your wife's, ſome of your acquaintances or hers, who chuſe to call themſelves your friends, will endeavour to poiſon the ſweets of your ſociety, becauſe they are not conſtant members of your moſt agreeable parties. Theſe

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enviers of them will name a lover for your wife, or you a miſtreſs—nay, do not ſtart, my dear ſon ; they will. If chance or malice brings the whiſper to your ear, do not think that prudence directs you to ſhut your door againſt the man or woman ſuppoſed your or your wife's choice : juſt the contrary ; let you and your wife ſhew yourſelves every where accompanied by theſe perſons. Your wife's young and untainted mind will be as much ſhocked at ſuch reports as yours can be ; but I appeal to your good ſenſe only to ſhew you the neceſſity of the conduct I have preſcribed, by ſuppoſing the reverſe for

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for a moment.——Mr. **, or Mrs. ***, are no longer in your ſet—Scandal will take care to ſay that your wife or you were jealous; and the very caution you uſe will be cited as a proof of connections between you.—The next friends you are ſeen much with, they are a ſecond lover or miſtreſs. Alas! muſt you part with them too?—Inſtead of curing the reports, then, you increaſe them by this method. In the courſe of ten years your wife will have had ten lovers, and you as many miſtreſſes.—My ſon, *never* let envy and detraction interrupt the private order and happineſs of your

days. Never give up a friend or companion that you like. Will envy and detraction make up the loſs? No; envy has a hunger and thirſt of miſchief which can never be allayed: the more it is fed, the more it increaſes. The man that has no friends, is a miſerable and contemptible object, with every advantage that rank or fortune can beſtow.

As yet I have ſuppoſed you in the moſt honourable and comfortable ſituation; now I muſt vary the ſcene.—You are no longer in love with your wife—ſtill you are her huſband;

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huſband; do not, like moſt of your ſex, be cruel enough to add to that misfortune of hers, your not loving her, the many others which are generally added to it. You are then no longer her lover; be her friend: her own intereſt, her children's, the intereſt of her fame and honour, conſtitute her your firſt, your beſt friend. There is a gentleneſs in our natures, an attention to trifles in our ſex, which induce yours to open your hearts to us, and you do not bluſh to enter into a detail of your feelings to us, when you ſcarce would own the cauſe of them to a

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man—Perhaps your wife loves you ſtill; ſhe will miſtake your friendſhip for love—Too happy will ſhe be, if, in deceiving herſelf, ſhe cheriſhes her paſſion for you—Leave her in her pleaſing error; never tell her you love her no longer, or leſs than you did. Such a confeſſion will deſtroy her kind illuſion. Loving you, and loving you not, her vanity would be ſhocked at ſuch a declaration. In either ſituation of her heart, ſhould ſhe even ſuſpect a change in you, ſeeing that your good-humour, confidence in her, your friendſhip and reſpect, are not

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fled with your love, ſhe will ſay to herſelf, " If he is not in love with " me, he is better."

Now, if with ceaſing to love her, you ſhould be in love with any other woman, do not retort upon your wife the frowns, the caprices, or diſappointments, you may ſuffer from the object you are in purſuit of. Cruel as men are in general, the moment they ceaſe to like the perſon of their wives, forgetting all the amiable virtues of their hearts, meanly, baſely torment them, till they commit ſome error, in which men fancy they have an excuſe for

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their inconſtancy, and a plea for further hardſhips, and juſtify to themſelves their folly in preferring women inferior to their wives in perſon and accompliſhments.

I do not ſuppoſe this; I have ſeen men often act in this manner: nor have I been ſurpriſed to ſee unhappy wives make advances to gain a lover, thinking to find ſome comfort for their ſorrows—ſad reſource, to chaſe the weight of torments, by collecting new ones! Yet this ſcene paſſes before my eyes daily. What humiliating court have I ſeen plain wives, neglected, make to men! Not

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Not ſo with a beautiful injured wife; every man that approaches her will inform her of her huſband's folly by his endeavours to ſupplant him in her affections, and ſtrew the path of her imprudence with many a fragrant roſe, regardleſs of the thorns that may wound her reputation.—Why ſhould you oppreſs, hate, or perſecute, becauſe you can no longer love? The ſingle recollection that a woman has been the object of your happieſt moments—the ſelected woman, whom you thought would adorn your houſe and name — is enough to oblige you to preſerve a tenderneſs, and a very great one, in your

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your conduct towards her. There is no crime in not loving; you can neither command your thoughts nor your heart—but you may your actions; and you muſt appear worthleſs to all perſons who have minds, if, in your intercourſe with our ſex, you do not conduct yourſelf with tenderneſs, honour, and gratitude.

I am aſtoniſhed often how men can treat their own judgment ſo ill, as to let the world ſee they ever diſlike and neglect what they once courted and adored!

I know a man who aſked a huſband

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huſband one day, why he had ſuch an averſion to his wife: "for," ſaid he, "I give you leave to be tired "of her perſon; but her conver- "ſation is of ſuch a nature, that a "man of ſenſe would be happy to "pay for liſtening to her—her man- "ners would grace a throne; and "her talents alone would ſuffice to "pleaſe and entertain, were ſhe ne- "ver to ſpeak a word—then her "judgment is ſo clear, that one "ſhould ſeek her opinion in any "difficult caſe."—"All that is very "true," replied the huſband; "but "all thoſe are become odious to "*me*."——Now, my dear ſon, that

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Supreme Power, who formed the human heart, alone can explain, how it can become ſo perverted, to feel as *odious* what is *inеſtimable.*—— Oh, may you never make ſo bitter a ſatire upon yourſelf!

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LETTER

LETTER VIII.

OF all the misfortunes that a married man falls into, there is none that ſubjects him to the ridicule of the world ſo much as jealouſy. Once poſſeſſed by it, he feels it like a dagger in his heart; and yet it is only matter of diverſion to all thoſe around him, and principally to the perſon who cauſes it. It is very ſeldom that compaſſion is a generous ſentiment. If you muſt inevitably be pitied by the world, let it rather be, becauſe it fancies you

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you are miſtaken in your opinion of your wife, (nay, even deceived by her,) than becauſe you form a juſt idea of her conduct, ſuppoſing it to be ſuch as muſt create jealouſy in your breaſt.

Of two evils you naturally would chuſe the leaſt: therefore, I adviſe you ever to ſtand between your wife and the eyes of a miſchievous world, or people about you, who, from twenty ſelf-intereſted views, may wiſh to ſeparate you and your wife. All the hard blows which may wound *her* reputation, muſt in the end fall upon you. If there ſhould happen

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happen any great diſunion between ye, and *you* endeavour to juſtify yourſelf by throwing all the blame on *her* ſide, the public may flatter your ungenerous hope for a ſhort time, from the too natural propenſity the world has of cruſhing the *weakeſt*, and yielding to *power*, which is on your ſide, not hers: but be aſſured, the unjuſt illuſion will not laſt long—merit and innocence oppreſſed finds its home in the hearts of all the virtuous and illumined of either ſex: by thoſe, from the beginning of your diſagreements, you will be avoided and abhorred;

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horred; and the public at large, envious and malicious as it is, will in the end blame you—if not for being the cauſe of your wife's ill conduct, or miſrepreſenting it,—for not concealing it.

How can any good ariſe from a ſentiment which is founded on injuſtice? The height of injuſtice is jealouſy. It is not at all wonderful that a man ſhould be charmed with a beautiful and accompliſhed woman; but it is very much ſo, that man, who is only natural and juſt in being ſo, ſhould be abſurd enough

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enough to be angry with another man, for being only as natural and juſt as himſelf.

It is a glorious, chearful, bright day; the ſun ſhines in all its ſplendour; how would you pity the man who would ſhut it out of his room, and ſit reading by the light of a candle, and cry, "I hate this day!"

Yet the man, who does not admire, and like the ſociety of an amiable and accompliſhed woman, is ſtill more to be pitied than he who diſdains the ſun. You, my ſon, as a jealous huſband, would

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blame him for disdaining the great vivifier of nature, yet be angry, if he admired your wife.

Look at jealousy, and its effects, without the pale of matrimony—the happiest lovers pass their time in making themselves and their sweetest moments martyrs to it. I condemn it; but I know it is inseparable from love, and like other bad attendants upon it. I would have you reflect upon it, and digest it through reason; so that it may never disturb your happiness, but be a stimulator to that passion, which is too apt to fade, and sink into indifference,

difference, between married people. —Jealouſy is as frequent and tenacious in friendſhip as in love; in both it ſhould go ſo far, and no farther——You aſk, how far — I will ſatisfy you.

Imagine, if you pleaſe, that the whole world wiſhes to be your miſtreſs's lover, or your friend's firſt friend; but do not think they will ever permit them to be ſo. Jealouſy, thus managed, will enhance every thing your miſtreſs or your friend does for you.—If your wife ſhould be jealous of you, you muſt

endeavour to argue her out of her injuſtice, if ſhe is ſo without a cauſe, and if ſhe has any juſt reaſon for being ſo: but, if your domeſtic hours are to be paſſed in one continued ſtorm, you muſt tell her, her ſuſpicions are true, and point out an object totally indifferent to you, for her to turn her jaundiced looks upon, either to ſkreen the real one from her ſuſpicions, or to laugh her intirely out of her jealouſy, when ſhe diſcovers her miſtake.

Jealouſy ceaſes to be, or turns into ſilent contempt, when there is cauſe

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cauſe for it; and I ſaid before, as the leaſt evil is the beſt of the two, for the comfort of your own life, it is better ſhe ſhould be ſure ſhe has loſt your heart, than to paſs her life and make yours miſerable, by the conſtant reproaches, juſt or unjuſt, of jealouſy.—Jealouſy is a fever; it muſt come to a criſis. I wiſh, if it muſt be one among the many bitter pills you are to ſhare between ye, that it may be intirely on her ſide, and not on yours: for, if you are jealous, you have it in your power to make her quite wretched, and yourſelf as ridiculous as huſ-

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bands generally do, when that orange-coloured hue poſſeſſes their mind; but if your wife is jealous, reproaches or ſilent grief can be her only reſources.

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LETTER

LETTER IX.

LOVE cannot be defined. — I was told once by a gentleman, that had wrote a very ingenious book, and publiſhed it, upon a ſcience which few men underſtand, though moſt purſue it, in England, that he intended to publiſh another upon love, becauſe very few people underſtood what it was. I adviſed him to lay aſide his intention; becauſe love varied its form according to the boſom it poſſeſſed: for example, a mild, generous nature will

produce a mild, generous love; a brutal, ignorant one, will exhibit a brutal, fooliſh love:—it is a fever of the mind, which, like fevers of the body, will ſhew its malignity according to the mental conſtitution of the perſon. Love, I repeat it, is not to be defined; nor is it to be conquered. Your heart will never aſk your reaſon leave to give itſelf away.——I have preſcribed to you the conduct I wiſh you to purſue, in caſe you ſhould ceaſe to love your wife: I muſt now reverſe the picture—it is on her ſide this paſſion has ceaſed. In the firſt poſition, your humanity and generoſity may aid

aid my counſel; in the laſt, I have your pride, vanity, and anger, or all three at once, to conquer.

Your wretched partner! how many ſtruggles, tears, and reſtleſs nights, will it coſt her, before ſhe owns it to herſelf—how many more, before ſhe confeſſes her paſſion for another! and yet, my ſon, the one is the inevitable conſequence of the other. This truth may ſhock the cold prudence of ſome who read theſe letters —perſons who would always have books repreſent the world as it ought to be, not as it is—that act as if they had no feeling, probably having none:

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none: but, as it is my ſon's happineſs I value, and not the opinion of thoſe who judge only to condemn, I ſhall keep my promiſe, and repreſent truth without a veil.—— Ah! my ſon, may ſuch a wife as I have repreſented yours, find in your conduct a ſhield to defend her from the poiſoned arrows directed by envy only, and conſtantly to ſuperior merit! Her loving you no longer, does not diminiſh one of her talents, nor rob her of one beauty. Strive not to ſtifle that flame which all the courage her mind can collect cannot conquer. Never tell your wife, you know ſhe loves you not, or loves another.

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another—do not add to the pangs which already are labouring in her heart, which leſſen her health and beauty, and which tear her ſoul, when ſhe looks on you and her children. If a ſenſible woman has a paſſion, be aſſured it is never out of her thoughts a moment; her books, her muſic, her dreſs, even her needle-work, tend to the object of it. Suppoſing you are mean enough to make an excuſe for taking her out of the place where ſhe can ſee him, ſhe will invent one for ſtaying; or, if ſhe quits it for another, he will follow her. If he does not, ſhe loving you not, and forced *by you* from

from what ſhe does love, ſhe muſt, alas! ſhe muſt deteſt you. He may proceed to imprudences which may end in a ſeparation or divorce between you—look around you, and ſee what confuſion divorces and ſeparations make!

If, with the vaniſhing of her love for you, yours ſhould ſtill remain for her, and her conduct ſhould oblige you to let her know you feel it, tell her you know you have loſt her heart; but pity, and do not *blame*——tell her, you cannot alter yours—that, if you was to follow the dictates of anger, you would part

part from her—that for her ſake alone you will not—but, conſcious that your preſence muſt be painful to her, you will abſent yourſelf:—and, if the ſervice of your country (for I hope you are a ſoldier) does not furniſh you with an excuſe to leave her for ſome time, your eſtates or your family may furniſh you with a plea to abſent youſelf; or, with the conduct I have preſcribed, you may eaſily avoid being alone with her ten minutes in the four and twenty hours. *Time* then may do what her reaſon has attempted in vain—Time alone. Yet certain, in this caſe, her lover's conduct may haſten

haſten the period of her paſſion for him; and *never*, *never*, my ſon! ſpeak but once to her upon the ſubject, horrid to her, and painful to you: much leſs ever let the eye of an idle, curious world, diſcover that you do not live *well together*, as it is called; for when once a man ſuffers what is called the world to ſee or meddle in his domeſtic accidents, his wife and he ſeldom live at all together. The parting of a man and wife affects the children's intereſt too much for me not to guard you againſt it. Then your two families are ſet at variance with one another —yours blame her, hers will hate you.

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you. You will accuſe one another of being the cauſe of all the malice and nonſenſe that will enſue; and, between the wide breach a ſeparation will make, your wife, though cold, innocent, and ſpotleſs, as the falling ſnow from heaven, will ſuffer in her reputation.

No act of violence, my ſon, is ever forgiven. Suppoſing a man *locks* his wife up, then will her mind rove the more for the confinement of her body. How would you be treated, if you was to come into the chamber of her whom you have made a captive? Her ſoul, conſcious

ſcious of its natural right to independence, will ſpurn you from her ſight, as a coward, who does ill, becauſe he dares. The wife's conſtant ſoliloquy, who loves her huſband, and is ſure ſhe has loſt his heart, is this: "Who will love thee "as I do, inconſtant? I will ima- "gine a thouſand new ways to "pleaſe, and ſecure thee mine for "ever." Now, this is the huſband's: "My wife is an ungrateful "woman — ſhe commits a crime" [that crime is ceaſing to love him] "—if I urge it, ſhe does not deny "it—if I threaten, ſhe threatens in "her turn—if I plead my paſſion "for

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"for her, the ſilent tear that ſteals "down her cheek, her averted "cheek, the hand ſhe waves to "bid me retire, her cold looks "that ſcarcely reſt a moment on "my face, all tell me that I plead "in vain."——O fooliſh and unthinking man! who cannot ſee ſhe is diſtracted by every ſelf-reproach that can wound a feeling heart—her duty, his love, his very preſence, frightens the blood from her lovely face, and ſends it hurrying to that heart that beats, alas! for another.

I cannot conceive why huſbands are always ſo unjuſt, when they

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quarrel with their wives, to accuſe them of ingratitude—it is the conſtant and common reproach. Let me, O my ſon! ſet in your picture the example of every Engliſhman's rights and power, and you ſhall judge what right you have to call your wife ungrateful.

You are in love with her becauſe you cannot help it: ſhe is not obliged to you, then, for the primitive cauſe of her being yours.—You marry her, to get poſſeſſion of that perſon, which you otherwiſe could never approach: it is to ſatisfy yourſelf, then, you take her; is ſhe to be obliged to you

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you for that?—Once your wife, you are probably the only man who has ever touched her cheek: are you the pure, untainted being that ſhe is? In this point on whoſe ſide is the obligation, eh? You bluſh, my ſweet boy.——Her rank is equal to yours: ſhe cannot be obliged to you for conſequence then; but her alliances are a feather in your cap.—— Perhaps you make her fine preſents: yes, but a huſband's power permits him to take them from her when he pleaſes; ſo that any gratitude ſhe might feel as a miſtreſs for thoſe, muſt vaniſh when ſhe feels herſelf your wife.—She truſts her whole for-

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tune, her happineſs, to you in becoming ſo; her time, her beauty, ſhe devotes to you; her relations, her friends, ſhe gives up for you: what do you give up in gaining her? Neither friends, relations, nor favourite amuſements; you only add her, as another treaſure, to the many you poſſeſs: on whoſe ſide is the obligation? It is your paſſions that drive you on, and her preſence you would ſeek, were ſhe another man's wife, in defiance to prudence and honour, moſt probably.

She leaves a tender mother, a kind ſiſter, or an inſtructing companion, who

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who has watched the growing beauties of her mind with fond exultation: will ſhe find theſe in you?—If, then, there is a breach in your affections, if either one or both are miſerable by being united, it is the huſband, and not the wife, that is ungrateful.

Your wife is not obliged to you for name, beauty, or education. She lived upon her fortune: it is not yours that make her live. She is admired and courted by all who ſee her: they do not borrow your eyes to ſee with. You *take* her, my ſon, obſerve, you *take* her; but ſhe gives

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herſelf to you: on whoſe ſide is the obligation?——A man then ſays to his wife, "You are a moſt ungrate-"ful woman: I love you paſſionate-"ly, and yet you do not love me!"

This man loves, becauſe he cannot help it; and ſhe loves him not, becauſe his conduct, probably, has helped her thoroughly out of her love; for ſhe loved him once—— then I affirm it is he that is ungrateful.

Ingratitude is a reproach which can only be juſt where obligations call for gratitude. I cannot ſee what obli-

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obligation an Engliſhman confers on a woman when he marries her, and, having her, making her preſents, ſcarcely ever ſo magnificent as he would make his miſtreſs, that he is aſhamed of owning he lives with.

But I ſee that your wife gives herſelf and all her fortunes away—the poſſibility of ever doing that again—her *entire liberty*, her brothers, ſiſters, and all her friends, for you—let her be ſurpriſed with finding them all centered in you; and, if you are not, or are, her lover, let her find in you her firſt, her generous, and grateful friend.

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LETTER X.

LEST the preceding letter ſhould not have its effect upon you, and that you, or any of my readers, ſhould be ſurpriſed at my repeating the words *Engliſh* man ſo often, I ſhall add, in this letter, a detail of all an *Engliſh* man may do with impunity, and which no other huſbands can but the Engliſh.

Any Sir John Brute may lock his wife up, and even beat her; and there is no power to whom a wife can

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can apply to prevent him. He may inſult and torment her in any way he pleaſes—he may never pay her pin-money—he may take the loweſt proſtitute, place her in his wife's coach, by his ſide, travel in England with her where ſhe is not known, and call her his wife, whoſe good name is reſponſible for every indecent folly the miſtreſs may be guilty of—A huſband may laviſh all his eſtates and money upon women of the town, and there is no power to reſtrain or correct him. In France, a woman of quality's name ſported with, ſhe may get a lettre de cachet, and confine the cauſe of her huſband's

band's conduct: and if a man of great fortune and rank, in France, is ruining his children, the families of the husband and wife join and get a power to restrain him; and a wife has a right, if she pleases, to commence a law-suit with her husband upon any trivial misconduct, and force him by law to give her a separate maintenance— nay, there is a higher power, to whom people of very high rank in France apply, their Sovereigns, who with care generally redress the wrongs of the oppressed, and support by their countenance, and often with a pension, an injured wife. Is it so in England?

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land? Alas! it is not; Majeſty can only ſee things in the light that the few who approach it chuſe to throw upon it—and what woman of high birth and ſpirit would chuſe to deſcend from what ſhe owes herſelf, enough to aſk for juſtice, without being certain of obtaining it; and ſtooping to give a detail, even to her Sovereign, when the lawleſs licentiouſneſs of England inſults even Majeſty itſelf!

Theſe are facts which are oſtenſible—now turn and view the chance for happineſs a woman has in ſmall domeſtic concerns in England, where the

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the ſports of the field, the houſes of parliament, and, above all, the clubs, forbid a woman to hope for comfort in the ſociety of her huſband, brothers, or friends; for their converſation, engroſſed by theſe three grand objects, is more inſupportable to women than ſolitude.

Collect all theſe diſadvantages to women, and conſider now, my dear ſon, on whoſe ſide the obligation is when a woman gives herſelf away in this country.—You think, perhaps, you never could tranſgreſs the bounds preſcribed by civility, nor take advantage of the tyranny you *may* exerciſe.

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erciſe. Ah! my dear ſon, if you knew how imperceptibly familiarity brings on indifference, indifference creates incivility, incivility ſows the ſeeds of diſlike, and diſlike ends in hatred; you would dread the firſt ſtep you take into your wife's apartment, much as you now adore her. How happy ſhall I be, if I can, by ſhewing you what *may happen*, prevent your looking back with pain on what *has been!*

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LETTER XI.

THESE Letters may fall into the hands of people in inferior ſituations of life to yours. Seduced by the juſtneſs of ſome of my advice, they may imagine they can improve their happineſs by following the whole —— they are miſtaken. The amuſement and buſineſs attending moſt profeſſions, the hurry and conſtant watchfulneſs of ſome, the frequent abſences a profeſſion of any kind obliges a man to make from his wife, enhances

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hances the pleaſures of the moments he paſſes with her: thoſe moments are to him the only moments of liberty; in your ſituation, thoſe moments are the only thing like ſlavery you will ever feel. You get up in the morning, certain you ſhall do nothing all day but juſt what you pleaſe. That power generally makes a gentleman pleaſed with nothing, but very much diſpleaſed at the *ennui* he feels; which if you think your wife alone can diſſipate, you will be diſappointed—it will require an inexhauſtible fund of good-humour in her only to *ſupport* it Your

apothecary,

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apothecary, your cheeſemonger, your taylor, every tradeſman you have, is a happier being than you are. Good ſouls! with their wigs, they hang up all their care of an evening, and forget the toils and contradictions of the day in the welcome of their wives and domeſtic ſupper. Believe me, my ſon, Cupid often flies the gilded room and damaſk couch, and is found in humble ſpaces, where diſmal prints, *miſrepreſenting their moſt gracious Majeſties*, are the moſt magnificent ornaments — and a green ſtuff bed is the godſhip's favourite throne. Yes, my ſon, in general,

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general, magnificence and content are wide aſunder; and the human heart muſt be *content*, before it can yield to ſofter or more paſſionate ſenſations. If you doubt the truth of what I ſay, the frequency of ſeparations and diſputes between married gentlefolks, and the rarity of them between tradeſpeople, will prove my argument.

The conduct I have adviſed you to have with ſuch a charming woman as I have ſuppoſed your wife, muſt not be obſerved, if ſhe ſhould be a fool, particularly a pretty fool. You muſt govern her, my ſon:

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commands, and no advice, ſhe muſt receive from you: the language of reaſon and friendſhip is unintelligible to a fool. Never give her any reaſons why you will have things done ſo and ſo, but civilly ſay *ſhe muſt*. Permitting her to act for herſelf, will be expoſing her and yourſelf to the ridicule of the whole world. If ſhe has not ſenſe enough to direct herſelf, you muſt direct her. Many men fancy they are good huſbands, ſaying, "I let my "wife do exactly what ſhe "pleaſes;" that is, not troubling his head at all what ſhe does, ſo that

that ſhe is in good humour at his dinner or bed time.

Wife, my ſon, means companion; and, if ſhe is not companionable, the beſt thing you can do is not to let the world know it. Your family, your intimates, will in a ſhort time find it out; and you will appear in a low and deſpicable light to them, if you let your fool run about to be the ſubject of the day. Your child you govern, that it may not, grown up, make you bluſh—govern your wife then, if ſhe has a childiſh mind; for, grown up to womanhood, that childiſh

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mind will never be fit to walk alone. Fools are always ſly, and artful. I have ſeen many lead or govern people of ſuperior underſtanding to themſelves. I never cautioned you againſt the art of a ſenſible woman, but beware of the ſlyneſs of your fool. Cunning is a weed that can only flouriſh in the ſoil of a weak mind.

If, after all the caution I have given you againſt parting with your wife, ſenſible or fooliſh, your temper or hers ſhould make it impoſſible for you to live together, let me earneſtly recommend to you, my

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my dear ſon, to part with her with all the generoſity ſhe has a right to expect, both as to money matters and words and manners. Remain with her on writing and ſpeaking terms; and if ſhe has children, viſit her at leaſt four times a year. In England, generally, when a wife and huſband part, all the huſband's connections deſert, if not abuſe the wife, with or without cauſe. A wife, parted from her huſband, ſuffers all the diſadvantages of widowhood, without the power of giving herſelf to a man ſhe loves: never rob her of the comfort of having her children, particularly her

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girls—the common, though cruel method of proceeding of Engliſh *gentlemen.* Conſider that this woman has waſted her bloom and time in ſuffering exquiſite torture to produce and rear thoſe children —that they are hers—ah! never take the advantage of an unjuſt power to tear them from her arms. If your wife is ill-tempered or fooliſh, or both, ſtill your girls are better taken care of in her preſence than in yours: your viſits will keep her, and thoſe who have the care of them, in awe.

I believe I have placed you in every

every ſituation to which a married man may be expoſed. I will never ſuppoſe you *unmarried.* I hold divorces as deſperate and ſhameful remedies to evil. Divorces make marriages in England more barefaced indecencies than they are; and truly, if one reflects upon marriage at all, it is, without *eclats* of any kind, indecent enough to make one aſhamed of it.

The only wiſh I have left to form with the many I have diſcovered, and the many more I have concealed, is, that, if your wife is ſuch as I have ſuppoſed her to be, ſhe

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may gain a total aſcendency over your mind, and be the inviſible cauſe of every ſtep you take in life. May her power over you be ſo gently exerciſed, that no one may ever perceive it; and you only feel it by the love and eſteem her ſuperiority may engrave on your heart for ever!

Should you be naturally of a careleſs and idle diſpoſition, hide it with care; be attentive to (and dwell upon) trifles. In money matters, there is an old Engliſh proverb which ſays, Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themſelves;

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ſelves: ſo, in the current coin of events, great accidents rouſe the minds of the moſt indolent to act with prudence and propriety; but the ſmaller ones are too often neglected, yet from thoſe only proceed the comforts or miſery which hang about us from morning till night.— I ſhall conclude with a beautiful and ſtrong illuſtration of what I ſay from Madame de Sevigny, who, writing to her daughter about her ſon young Grignan, ſays, —— "Nous tâchons de lui inſpirer de "l' horreur pour cet air de Grand "Seigneur, de qu' importe, et "d' indifference, qui conduit à "toutes

" toutes ſortes d'injuſtices, et enfin " à l'hôpital."

Yes, my child, that *mauvais ton de qu' importe*, ſeen in you, will be acquired by your wife, your children, and your vaſſals; the neighbouring echo will catch the ſound, and, like the echo, your fortune, fame, and happineſs, will be loſt in air, and then the world in general will juſtly ſay, *Qu' importe ?*——Adieu, my dear ſon !

********* ******.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

MY lovely country-women may imagine theſe Letters are written to deter them from entering into the marriage-ſtate; ill-natured people may ſay I mean to depreciate that ſtate; but I proteſt I hold it as the moſt comfortable and honourable (honourably and comfortably treated) that ever was imagined, and that theſe Letters were written to make my ſon happy, and the wives in England leſs

leſs unhappy than they have hitherto been. If they have theſe effects, my wiſhes are anſwered ; if not, at leaſt I have a ſecret conſcientious pleaſure in doing what I think my duty towards my country,—a country where bravery in men, and beauty joined to ſoftneſs in women, mark out either ſex to be comforts to each other.

How charming for a woman to dare avow a paſſion for him, whom the world allows her to call her protector and friend ; and how painful to be obliged to obey and aſſociate with

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with one, whom her innate dignity, honour, ſenſe, and feelings, condemn!

How ſatisfactory, my dear ſon, to call *yours* that merit which every man of taſte envies you the poſſeſſion of; and how diſgraceful to feel aſhamed of what was once your choice!—Such are the contraſts of married ſituations, *delightful*, or *horrible*.

Men *chuſe*, and women only *accept*; in general, therefore, when there is diſcord in marriage, men ought to be more aſhamed of changing their opinions than women.

But

But I think I hear you aſk, But does not the blooming maid of ſixteen, by accidents or time, grow diſfigured in her face, and the gentle obedience of that age turn to ſpleen or ill-nature, when the Loves and Graces hover no longer around her?

I grant it——

And that the gay and well-dreſſed Strephon of twenty years old, turns at forty into a ſlovenly and bald-headed foxhunter, or grave politician.

Yet, through all the changes of

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of mind and perſon, man and wife may ſtill be friends, confiding in each other their mutual accidents, and, by depoſiting in each other's breaſts only their changes, ſpare an ill natured and ignorant public the ſavage amuſement, and their own families the pain, of ſeeing diſcord reign, where honour and gratitude, nay common ſenſe, ſhould hold out the picture of amity and concord.

********* ******.

THE END.

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